



Cal EMA
CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2009

Cal EMA CONTACT

Office of Media Relations
(916) 845-8400

Tsunami Advisory Prompts California's Emergency Management Agency to Coordinate with Local, State and Federal Officials

Sacramento – The National Weather Service has issued a “Tsunami Advisory” for the coast of California and Oregon as a result of this morning’s earthquake that occurred in the Samoa Island region near Pago Pago, American Samoa. As a result, the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) is now working closely with the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, the USGS National Earthquake Information Center, NOAA Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and NOAA West Coast to ensure state and local officials have the latest information to keep residents safe.

According to the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, forecasts indicate that increased wave activity with amplitudes of 20 to 65 centimeters (between 7.9 inches to nearly 26 inches) will occur at points along the west coast, including San Luis Obispo and Crescent City. These currents or waves can be dangerous to those very near or in the ocean. The waves are expected to build and reach their maximum approximately one and a half hours after the initial arrival. However, widespread inundation as seen in other regions of the world is not expected along California’s coast.

The advisory recommends that those living in low-lying coastal areas should be alert to instructions from local emergency officials. Those in the Tsunami Advisory areas should move out of the water, off the beach and out of harbors and marinas during the estimated times of arrival provided by the National Weather Service – sometime between 7:30 and 10:30 pm (PST) this evening.

The California Emergency Management Agency has been in constant contact with the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, the USGS National Earthquake Information Center, NOAA Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and has held conference calls with emergency management officials in all coastal counties and state agencies to provide the latest information.

Cal EMA has also been coordinating with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - Region 9 to ensure that California’s emergency response resources are available if needed.

IMPORTANT FACTS

Tsunami advisories mean that there is a forecast of strong currents or waves dangerous to persons in or very near the water is imminent or expected.

-MORE-

-2-2-2-

Significant widespread inundation is not expected for areas under an advisory. However, currents may be hazardous to swimmers, boats and coastal structures and may continue for several hours after the initial wave arrival.

It's important for people living, working or visiting the coast to understand that a warning or watch has not been issued.

Previous surges have struck California's coast in the past – the last time in 2006 when a surge damaged several boats near Crescent City, causing \$10 million in damages. Wave amplitudes in Crescent City in 2006 were 88 centimeters (nearly 35 inches).

Experts are predicting a surge, rather than a tsunami, however it's still important that Californians do their part to ensure their own safety and that of their loved ones and pay attention to direction from local emergency officials.

-Cal EMA-